blind to facts which are opposed to our prepossessions, or may conceal from us their true import when we behold them." There may be consolation in the reflection that the blindness thus occasionally affecting even earnest scientific investigators has not happened by chance, having been predicted. (See Isaiah xxix. 14.) The up-hill task of demolishing the unsound fabric of theory, based upon long-cherished but fallacious "prepossessions," may be arduous unless light be granted, making it clear that according to Galileo, "Scripture and Nature proceed from the same Source, and are, therefore, incapable of speaking a different language." He pointed out the absurdity of supposing that professors of astronomy would refuse to believe those deductions of reason which appealed to their judgment with all the power of demonstration. Yet Galileo's noblest discoveries were the derision of his contemporaries! Brewster remarks that "men are not necessarily obstinate because they cleave to deeply-rooted errors; nor are they absolutely dull when they are long in understanding, and slow in embracing newly-discovered truths." Therefore we must bear in mind that in questions of science, the *authority* of a thousand is not worth the humble *reasoning* of a single individual. "The simplest ideas," La Place remarks, "are usually those which are the last to force themselves upon us."

ART. XVII.—*On a Remarkable Symmetrically Deformed Skeleton.* By GEORGE B. HALFORD, M.D., Professor of Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology, in the University of Melbourne.

[Read 24th September, 1868.]

This remarkably deformed skeleton is the property of the Melbourne University. It was purchased for me at Paris in 1862, by Messrs. Raginal and Co., and is stated to have been prepared by the late Dr. Sue. The being, whose skeleton is here represented, with pipe in hand, is said to have played the instrument on the steps of one of the churches in Paris, and to have attained the age of twenty-eight years. Further than this, I have not been able to obtain any information.

The height of the skeleton as it now rests is two feet six

REMARKABLE SYMMETRICALLY DEFORMED SKELETON.

Engraved from a Photograph.

and a-half inches. The general deformity is that resulting from rickets of childhood, from which recovery had occurred as seen in the hardness of the bones. The compressed thorax, curved spine, diminutive pelvis and curved extremities are all sufficient evidence of this. The peculiar deformity, however, consists in the symmetrically blending of the lower ends of the two thigh-bones, which are supported by one leg so as to form one knee-joint only; this being, however, placed directly in a line with the promontory of the sacrum, or if the upright position were assumed immediately beneath the centre of gravity of the trunk. It is evident, therefore, the one foot would, with the assistance of crutches, be an efficient means of support and progression. That this was so, I think, is shown by the forward curve of the tibia and fibula, and by the large muscular impressions on the bowed humeri. It will be seen that the supporting leg and foot correspond to the right of normal skeletons, and on examining the knee-joint from behind, the right femur forms a somewhat larger part of the articulation than the left. In front, however, the patella appears to articulate equally with both.

Short of sawing through and spoiling the preparation, I have examined it as thoroughly as possible, and see no reason to believe it other than a natural deformity, and not an artificially prepared specimen. I can find, however, no record of anything similar, and before leaving England searched the museums for any such specimen, not only in man, but amongst the lower animals. It is certainly remarkable that no former account has been published of this case, as the disposition of the muscular apparatus here would have been very interesting. Perhaps time and opportunity were wanting for the work, or some religious or social scruples prevented it. Much interesting matter relating to deformities in general will be found in Vrolik's "Tabulæ ad illustrandam embryogenesin hominis et mammalium tam naturalem quam abdormen," which is in the University Library.